

3/17/88

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IO-14
NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 HA-06 PM-09 DCT-02
INRE-00 SYE-00 SP-02 /080 W

-----330636 172133Z /61

O 172055Z MAR 81
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8854

[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1899

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/17/87 (FRIEDMAN, T.B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] FURTHER INFORMATION ON TEMPORARY DISAPPEARANCES

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 1834, (B) FRIEDMAN/WHITMAN TELCON

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: WE HAVE NOW INDEPENDENTLY CONFIRMED THAT BOTH OF THE MEN WHO DISAPPEARED LAST WEEK WERE RELEASED MARCH 14. BOTH WERE BADLY MISTREATED DURING THEIR CAPTIVITY BY WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE. ONE OF THE FORMER CAPTIVES TOLD US OF HIS EXPERIENCE, WHICH WE RECOUNT BELOW FOR COMPARISON TO WHAT MAY WELL BE PLAYED BY WIRE SERVICES, WITH WHOM HE IS ALSO IN CONTACT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO AUTHORIZED THE OPERATION; NORMALLY, WE UNDERSTAND, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR WOULD BE INVOLVED, AT SOME LEVEL BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER IT WAS IN THIS CASE. THE PINON FAMILY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR ROLE. END SUMMARY.

2. [REDACTED] AS REPORTED TELCON, THE EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED THE RELEASE OF JORGE MAGNINO. THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION IS MAGNINO'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, MARIA RETAMOSO, WHO STATED TO US THAT HE ARRIVED AT HER HOME AROUND 2100 HOURS MARCH 14. SHE STATED THAT MAGNINO WAS BADLY TORTURED BY HIS CAPTORS WHO ALLEGEDLY USED AN ELECTRIC CATTLE PROD. RETAMOSO CONFIRMED THE EARLIER REPORT THAT ARMED [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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CIVILIAN MEN HAD RAIDED HER HOUSE MARCH 10 (THAT IS THE DAY BEFORE MAGNINO WAS ARRESTED). SHE ALLEGED THAT

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U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafield, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
() Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

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THEY WERE NOT LOOKING FOR MAGNINO AT THE TIME. RATHER, SHE BELIEVES THAT THE RAID WAS THE RESULT OF A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL RELATED TO PERSONALITIES AND NOT POLITICS. HOWEVER, WHILE THERE, THEY SEARCHED THE HOUSE AND FOUND SOME PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS THAT BELONGED TO MAGNINO, WHO HAD RESIDED WITH HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW UNTIL RECENTLY.

3. [REDACTED] WE HAVE ALSO NOW SPOKEN TO HECTOR PINON, TAKEN AT THE SAME TIME AS MAGNINO BY PRESUMED SECURITY FORCES, AND HIS FATHER, WHO CALLED AT THE EMBASSY MARCH 17. FURTHER TO THE INFORMATION CONTAINED REFTELS, HE STATED:

-- ARMED CIVILIANS WHO DID NOT IDENTIFY THEMSELVES ARRIVED AT THE PINON HOME IN SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS LOOKING FOR HECTOR'S BROTHER NORBERTO. WHEN THEY COULD NOT FIND HIM, THEY TOOK HECTOR.

-- THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MEN INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION WERE FROM THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE. PINON DECIDED FROM THE NOISE (TRAINS, CHILDREN PLAYING, ETC.) AT ONE OF HIS PLACES OF DETENTION THAT IT WAS THE HAEDO HEADQUARTERS OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE. WHILE THERE, HE STATES HE SAW MEN IN PROVINCIAL POLICE UNIFORMS.

-- HE WAS INTERROGATED AND TORTURED AT A DIFFERENT LOCATION THAN THE HAEDO PROVINCIAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS. HE WAS TAKEN TO THIS OTHER LOCATION DIRECTLY AFTER HIS SEIZURE AND AGAIN LATE MARCH 13. HIS
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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INTERROGATORS USED AN ELECTRIC CATTLE PROD ON HIM -- HE SHOWED US SCARS ON HIS ARMS HE SAID WERE CAUSED BEFORE HIS CAPTORS ADJUSTED THE LEVEL OF THE INSTRUMENT AND USED IT ELSEWHERE ON HIS BODY.

-- PRIOR TO HIS RELEASE ON MARCH 14, HE WAS DRIVEN AROUND FOR SEVERAL HOURS AND AT ONE TIME HIS CAPTORS STOPPED AND HELD A MOCK EXECUTION.

-- ON RELEASE, HIS CAPTORS NOT ONLY TOLD HIM

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TO TELL HIS FATHER TO STOP AGITATING ABOUT
WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE. THEY ALSO STATED THAT
IF HIS FATHER AND HIS BROTHER -- WHOSE ROLE
IN THE AFFAIR IS STILL UNCLEAR TO US -- DID
NOT CEASE THEIR ACTIVITIES THEY WOULD BE
KILLED. AFTER THE RELEASE, JORGE RECEIVED
A TELEPHONE CALL THAT SOUNDED THREATENING,
ESPECIALLY AS THE CALLER HAD THE SAME
DISTINCTIVE VOICE AS ONE OF HIS CAPTORS.

[REDACTED]
NVVZCZ
ADP906
[REDACTED]

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ACTION ARA-16

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	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SY-05	HA-06	PM-09	DCT-02
	INRE-00	SYE-00	SP-02	/080 W			
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O 172055Z MAR 81
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8855

[REDACTED] SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1899

-- THE POLICE INTEREST IN NORBERTO PROBABLY
ARISES FROM HIS ACTIVITIES IN BEHALF OF
THE CANTABRICA STRIKE. NORBERTO HAS BEEN
ONE OF THE MOST OUTSPOKEN WORKERS IN THE
METAL PLANT'S UNION. HOWEVER, THEY ALL STATED
THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW OF OTHER CANTABRICA
WORKERS WHO WERE THE OBJECT OF SIMILAR
POLICE ATTENTION. NORBERTO, LIKE SOME OTHER
CANTABRICA LEADERS, HAS BEEN IN HIDING FOR
SEVERAL WEEKS.

-- NORBERTO AND MAGNINO ARE FRIENDS JUST AS
JORGE AND MAGNINO KNOW EACH OTHER. HOWEVER,
THE TWO WERE NOT INVOLVED IN ANY COMMON
POLITICAL OR UNION ACTIVITY. MAGNINO, THEY
SAID, WAS ACTIVE AT A VERY LOW LEVEL IN
PROMOTING THE ACTIVITIES OF CONAE, A
DISSIDENT ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESSMEN. CONAE
TRIED TO ORGANIZE A NATIONAL STRIKE FEBRUARY
16 AND AMONG THE MAGNINO PAPERS SEIZED AT

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THE RETAMOSO HOUSE WERE UNDISTRIBUTED
FLYERS PROMOTING THAT STRIKE. ALSO TAKEN WERE
BOOKS "ABOUT THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION."

-- THE WHOLE PINON FAMILY HAS MOVED OUT OF THE
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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FAMILY HOME FOR REASONS OF SECURITY.

4. [REDACTED] DESPITE THE REPORTED THREATS BOTH PINONS ARE
CONTINUING THERE EFFORTS TO PUBLICIZE THIS CASE, AT
LEAST IN PART BECAUSE THEY APPARENTLY CONVINCED THAT
IS THE BEST WAY THEY CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES. THUS,
THEY HAVE TOLD ESSENTIALLY THE SAME STORY TO LOCAL
PAPERS WHO WOULD LISTEN TO THEM -- THE BUENOS AIRES
HERALD SUMMARIZES THESE EVENTS MARCH 17. THEY ALSO
ARE IN CONTACT WITH AT LEAST ONE AMERICAN WIRE SERVICE.

5. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE CANTABRICA CONNECTION MAY
EXPLAIN IN PART THE OSTENSIBLE TRIGGER FOR THESE EVENTS.
BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS WHO PULLED THAT TRIGGER AND
WHY. THE EASIEST EXPLANATION IS THAT THIS WAS A LOW
LEVEL OPERATION CONDUCTED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF
RESPONSIBLE HIGHER AUTHORITIES. INDEED, THIS IS WHAT
WE WERE TOLD BY THE PRESIDENCY, ALBEIT WITHOUT MUCH
CONVICTION MARCH 15. OUR OWN HYPOTHESIS IS THAT, WHILE
ATTRACTIVE FOR ITS SIMPLICITY, SUCH AN EXPLANATION DOES
NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE WAY SUCH OPERATIONS ARE TYPI-
CALLY CONDUCTED IN ARGENTINA -- THEY NEED TO BE CLEARED
AT A HIGHER LEVEL AND WITH OTHER SERVCIES. THE BUENOS AIRES
PROVINCIAL POLICE RESPOND TO SEVERAL AUTHORITIES -- THE INTERIOR
MINISTRY, THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR AND THE COMMAND OF THE FIRST
CORPS. ON LABOR MATTERS, SUCH AS THIS, THE LINE OF
AUTHORITY WOULD PROBABLY RUN TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY.
WE DO NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, WHETHER AND AT WHAT LEVEL THE
INTERIOR MINISTRY WAS INFORMED AHEAD OF THE FACT OF
THESE OPERATIONS. WHEN THE PROVINCIAL POLICE WERE
PUTTING LARGE NUMBERS OF MEN ON THE STREETS IN
SUCH OPERATIONS, OTHER SECURITY SERVICES ARE ALSO
ALERTED.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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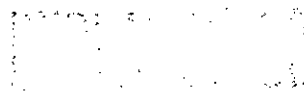
5. (U) BOTH PINONS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE

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EMBASSY'S INTEREST AND HELP.
RUSER

[REDACTED]

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